

Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,  
By his clenness, how that his sheepe sholde lyve.  
He sette nat his benefice to hyre,  
And leet his sheepe encombred in the myre,  
And ran to London, unto seint Poules,  
To seken hym a chaunterie for soules;  
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde,  
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,  
So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie;  
He was a shepherde, and nocht a mercenarie:  
And though he hooly were, and vertuous,  
He was to synful man nat despitous,  
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,  
But in his techyng discreet and benygne.  
To drawen folk to hevne by fairnesse,  
By good ensample, this was his bisynesse.  
But it were any persone obstinat,  
What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,  
Hym wolde he snybben sharply for the nonys;  
A better preest I trowe that nowher noon ys.  
He waited after no pompe and reverence,  
Ne maked him a spiced conscience,  
But Cristes loore, and his apostles twelve,  
He taughte, but first he folwed it hymselfe.

The  
Plowman

**W**IT hym ther was a Plowman, was  
his brother,  
That hadde ylad of dong ful many  
a fother,  
A trewe swynkere & a good was he,  
Lyyng in pees & parfit charitee.  
God loved he best, with al his hooler herte  
At alle tymes, though he gamed or smerte,  
And thanne his neighebores right as hymselfe.  
He wolde thresshe, and therto dyke and delve  
for Cristes sake for every poure wight,  
Withouthen hire, if it lay in his myght.  
His tithes payde he ful faire and wel,  
Bothe of his propre swynk and his catel.  
In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

The Reve  
The Millere  
The Somnour  
The Pardoner  
The Maunciple  
Geoffrey  
Chaucer

**H**ER was also a Reve and a Millere,  
A Somnour and a Pardoner also,  
A Maunciple, and myself; ther were  
nomo.  
The Millere was a stout carl for the  
nonys,  
ful byg he was of brawn, and eek of bones;  
That proved wel, for over al ther he cam,  
He was short sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,  
Ther nas no dore that he ne wolde heve of harre,  
Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.  
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,  
And therto brood, as though it were a spade.  
Upon the cope right of his nose he hade  
A werte, and theron stood a toft of berys,  
Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;  
His nosethirles blake were and wyde;  
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde;  
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys,  
He was a jangler and a goliardeys,  
And that was moost of synne and harlotries.  
Wel koude he stelen corn, and tollen thries;  
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.  
A whit cote and a blew hood wered he,

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A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,  
And therewithal he broghte us out of towne.  
**G**ENTIL Maunciple was ther of a  
temple,  
Of which achatours myghte take  
exmple  
for to be wise in byynge of vitaille;  
for wheither that he payde, or took

by taile,  
Algate he wayted so in his achaa,  
That he was ay biforn and in good staat.  
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,  
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace  
The wisdom of an heepe of lerned men?  
Of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten,  
That weren of lawe expert and curious,  
Of whiche there weren a duszyne in that hous,  
Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond  
Of any lord that is in Engelond,  
To maken hym lyve by his propre good  
In honour detteles, but if he were wood,  
Or tyve as scarsly as hym list desire,  
And able for to helpen al a shire  
In any caas that myghte falle or happe,  
In any caas this Maunciple sette hir aller cappe.

**H**E Reve was a sclendre colerik man,  
His berd was shave as ny as ever he  
kan;  
His heer was by his erys ful round  
yshorn,  
His tope was doked lyk a preest  
biforn.

ful longe were his legges and ful lene,  
Ylyk a staf, ther was no calf ysene.  
Wel koude he kepe a gerner and a bynne,  
Ther was noon auditour koude on him wyne.  
Wel wiste he, by the droghte and by the reyn,  
The yeldyng of his seed and of his greyn.  
His lordes sheepe, his neet, his dayerye,  
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,  
Was hoolly in this reves governyng,  
And by his covenant yaf the rekenyng  
Syn that his lord was twenty yee of age;  
Ther koude no man bryng hym in arrerage.  
Ther nas baillif, ne hierde, nor oother hyne,  
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;  
They were adrad of hym as of the deeth.  
His wonyng was ful faire upon an heeth,  
With grene trees yshadwed was his place.  
He koude better than his lord purchace,  
ful riche he was astored pryvely,  
His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly,  
To yeve and lene him of his owene good,  
And have a thank, and yet a gowne and hood.  
In youthe he hadde lerned a good myster,  
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.  
This Reve sat upon a ful good stot,  
That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.  
A long surcote of pers upon he hade,  
And by his syde he baar a rusty blade.  
Of Northfolk was this Reve of which I telle,  
Biside a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.  
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,  
And evere he rood the hyndreste of oure route.

The Somnour  
The Maunciple

**S**OMONOUR was ther with us in  
that place,  
That hadde a fyr reed cherubynnes  
face,  
for sawcelesse he was, with eyen  
narwe;

As hoot he was, and lecherous as a sparwe,  
With scaled browes blake, and piled berd,  
Of his visage children were aferd.  
Ther nas quyksilver, lytarge, ne brymston,  
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,  
Ne oymement that wolde clense and byte,  
That hym myghte helpen of the whelkes white,  
Nor of the knobbes sittynge on his chekes.  
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,  
And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood,  
Channe wolde he speke and crie as he were wood;  
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn  
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.  
A fewe termes hadde he, two or thre,  
That he had lerned out of som decree;  
No wonder is, he herde it al the day;  
And eek ye knowen wel, how that a jay  
Kan clepen Matthe, as wel as kan the pope.  
But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope,  
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie;  
Hy, Questio quid juris, wolde he crie.  
He was a gentil harlot and a kynde;  
A better felawe sholde men nocht fynde.  
He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn  
A good felawe to have his concubyn  
A twelfmonthe, and excuse hym atte fulle;  
And prively a fynch eek koude he pulle;  
And if he foond owher a good felawe,  
He wolde techen him to have noon awe,  
In swich caas, of the Erecdekenes curs,  
But if a mannes soule were in his purs;  
For in his purs he sholde ypunysshed be:  
Purs is the Erecdekenes helle, seyde he.  
But wel I woot he lyed right in dede,  
Of cursyng oghte ech gilty man to drede,  
for curs wol slee right as assoillyng savith;  
And also war him of a Significavit.  
In daunger hadde he his owene gise  
The yonger girles of the diocise,  
And knew hir conseil, and was al hir reed.  
A gerland hadde he set upon his heed,  
As greet as it were for an ale stake,  
A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.

The Pardoner

**W**IT hym ther rood a gentil Pardoner  
Of Rouncivale, his freend and his  
compeer,  
That streight was comen fro the  
court of Rome.  
ful loude he soong Com hider  
love to me.

This Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun,  
Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.  
This Pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wax,  
But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex;  
By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,  
And therewith he his shuldres overspradde;  
But thynne it lay by colpons oon and oon;  
But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon,

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for it was trussed up in his walet.  
Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet,  
Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.  
Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare,  
A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe;  
His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe,  
Bretful of pardon, comen from Rome al hoot.  
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot;  
No berd hadde he, ne nevere sholde have,  
As smothe it was as it were late yshave;  
I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare.  
But of his craft, fro Berwyk in to Ware,  
Ne was ther swich another pardoner;  
for in his male he hadde a pilwe beer,  
Which that he seyde was cure lady veyl.  
He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl  
That Seint Peter hadde whan that he wente  
Upon the see, til Jhesu Crist hym hente.  
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,  
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.  
But with thise relikes, whan that he foud  
A poure person dwellynge upon lond,  
Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye  
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.  
And thus with feyned flaterye and japes,  
He made the person and the peple his apes.  
But trewely to tellen, atte laste,  
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste;  
Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie,  
But alderbest he song an offertorie;  
for wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,  
He moste preche, and wel affile his tonge  
To wynne silver, as he ful wel koude;  
Therefore he song the murierly and loude.

**W**IT have I toold you shortly, in a  
clause,  
The staat, tharray, the nombre, and  
eek the cause  
Why that assembled was this  
compaignye

In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,  
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.  
But now is tyme to yow for to telle  
How that we baren us that ilke nyght,  
Whan we were in that hostelrie alyght;  
And after wol I telle of our viage,  
And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.

**A**T first, I pray yow of youre  
curteisye,  
That ye narette it nat my vileynye,  
Though that I pleynly speke in this  
mateere,

To telle yow hir wordes & hir cheere,  
Ne though I speke hir wordes proprely:  
for this ye knowen also wel as I,  
Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,  
He moot reherce, as ny as evere he kan,  
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,  
At speke he never so rudeliche or large;  
Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,  
Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe.  
He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother,  
He moot as wel seye o word as another.  
Crist spak himself ful brode in hooly writ,

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